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HCF 395

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ACTION EA-15

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FM USDEL FRANCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3093

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC UNN

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 USDEL FRANCE 7236

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SAIGON FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS

SUBJECT: PARIS MEETINGS ON VIET-NAM: PRESS BRIEFING BY US DELEGATION
SPOKESMAN STEPHEN J. LEDOGAR, JUNE 4, 1970.

FYI: PRESS SPOKESMEN BRIEFED IN FOLLOWING ORDER: GVN, US, DRV,
NLF. END FYI.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS BRIEFING BY STEPHEN LEDOGAR,
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1970, 3:35 P.M.

MR. LEDOGAR: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PRESIDENT NIXON SAID THE FOLLOWING
LAST NIGHT:

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"TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TONIGHT I SAY AGAIN: THE DOOR TO A NEGOTIATED PEACE REMAINS WIDE OPEN. EVERY OFFER WE HAVE MADE AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY, I HEREWITHE REAFFIRM. WE ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE WHENEVER THEY ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE."

WELL, TODAY THE OTHER SIDE SHOWED NO INCLINATION TO ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF THE BASIC ISSUES. IN FACT, THEY WERE -- THEY HAD IN EFFECT NO RESPONSE ON WHAT CALLED FOR NOT REALLY NEGOTIATION, BUT JUST A HUMANITARIAN GESTURE ON THEIR PART. I BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN BRIEFED ON IT ALREADY.
I WILL TAKE ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.

Q- STEVE, IN THE LAST PART OF THE ADDITIONAL REMARKS, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT RESPONDED. HE SAID: "THEREFORE, I SEE NO REASON TO PROLONG THE SESSION." DID THE SESSION END FORTWITH?

A- NO. AFTER THAT REMARK MR TIEN HAD SOMETHING TO SAY BUT IT WAS NOT ON THE SUBJECT OF PRISONERS. MR VY HAD SOMETHING TO SAY, WHICH AGAIN WAS NOT ON THE SUBJECT OF PRISONERS. AND THEN MR PHONG CAME IN AND HE NOTED THAT, OBVIOUSLY THE HANOI ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT WISH TO GIVE A CONSTRUCTIVE AND ADEQUATE RESPONSE." AND THEN MR VY SAID THAT, "CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED ISSUE OF PRISONERS OF WAR WHICH HAS JUST BEEN RAISED BY THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT KNOWN THAT IN PREVIOUS SESSIONS WE HAVE ALREADY CLEARLY REVEALED THIS CUSTOMARY MANEUVER ON THE PART OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND I BELIEVE THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO REREAD OUR STATEMENTS ON THAT MATTER TO FAMILIARIZE ITSELF WITH OUR VIEWPOINTS."
I WILL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THAT IS A RESPONSE.

AND THEN IT WAS AGREED TO ADJOURN.

Q- STEVE, LAST NIGHT SENATOR PERCY SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON APPOINT A SO-CALLED TOP-LEVEL NEGOTIATOR FOR THE PARIS TALKS. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

A- NO, I HAVE NO COMMENT ON THE SENATOR'S SUGGESTION.

Q- ON THE SAME MATTER, IN THE PAST YOU HAVE SAID THAT THE REASON

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THAT -- ONE OF THE REASONS THAT NO PERMANENT AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN
NAMED IS THAT YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN. COULD YOU
ELABORATE ON THAT A LITTLE BIT? ARE YOU SEEKING SOME SORT OF FORMAL
INDICATION FROM THE OTHER SIDE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A PERMANENT
AMBASSADOR WERE NAMED?

A- WELL, THE MOST RECENT STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT WAS, I BELIEVE,
BY SECRETARY ROGERS IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN ROME, AND I HAVE NOTHI
NG
TO ADD TO THAT.

I WILL BE GLAD TO REPEAT WHAT THE BASIC POSITION IS, WHICH IS THAT
THEY KNOW THAT WE ARE FULLY EMPOWERED TO DEAL WITH ANY SERIOUS
PROPOSAL THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE. OUR PROBLEM IS WE JUST HAVEN'T HAD
ANY SERIOUS PROPOSALS.

Q- DO YOU FEEL WITH THE OTHER SIDE HAVING SORT OF DEMOTED THE RANKS
OF THEIR DELEGATION THAT THEY ALSO HAVE FULL POWERS TO NEGOTIATE?

A- AMBASSADOR HABIB HAD A SIMILAR QUESTION ON HIS RETURN TO THE
EMBASSY, AND, IF I MAY, I WILL JUST READ TO YOU HIS ANSWER. HE SAID:
"WELL, REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH SIDES ARE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES. T
HEY
REPRESENT THEIR SIDE AND WE REPRESENT OUR SIDE. I CAN SPEAK
FOR MY RESPONSIBILITY AND MY AUTHORITY. I SUGGEST YOU ASK THEM ABOUT
THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND THEIR AUTHORITY.
.../... HABIB

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FM USDEL FRANCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3094
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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WE, OF COURSE, TREAT THEM AS THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER SIDE, AS WE HAVE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THESE TALKS." Q BUT YOU ALSO HAVE TWO YEARS OF EXPERIENCE NOW. DID YOU NOT FIND WHEN THERE WERE HIGH-LEVEL PEOPLE HERE THAT SOME MOVEMENT WAS BROUGHT ABOUT IN THE TALKS?

Q I DIDN'T HEAR THE QUESTION.

A THE QUESTION WAS WE HAVE HAD A COUPLE OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE HERE AND HAVE WE FOUND THAT THERE WAS MOVEMENT WHEN THERE WERE HIGHER LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES HERE AS OPPOSED TO, I ASSUME YOU MEAN, NO MOVEMENT NOW.

Q YES.

A I HAVEN'T NOTED ANY MOVEMENT EVER. SO IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A QUESTION OF THE LEVEL OF THE REPRESENTATIVES THEY SEND. IT SEEMS TO BE A QUESTION OF THE ORDERS THAT THEY SEND TO WHICHEVER REPRESENTATIVES ARE HERE. ALL THAT IS LACKING IN THESE MEETINGS TO TURN THEM INTO NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME IS INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HANOI CHIEF OR ACTING CHIEF OR ASSISTANT ACTING CHIEF OR

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WHOEVER IT MIGHT BE, TO GET GOING, TO AT LEAST PROBE, TO TRY TO
FIND OUT.

Q STEVE, ARE YOU DISAPPOINTED IN THE RESPONSE OF THE OTHER SIDE
TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S REMARKS OR DID YOU EXPECT ANY OTHER KIND
OF RESPONSE?

A WELL, THERE REALLY WASN'T VERY MUCH IN THE WAY OF RESPONSE.
OF COURSE, THE TIME WAS VERY SHORT. EVEN WITH OUR
COMMUNICATIONS, THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS WERE HERE IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE MORNING -- THAT IS TO SAY, THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

Q DOES THAT MEAN, STEVE, THAT YOU MIGHT EXPECT SOMETHING NEXT
WEEK, WHEN THEY WILL HAVE DIGESTED THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH?

A I WOULD HOPE SO. I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING THAT WAS RESPONSIVE TO
HIS OFFERS THERE.

Q COULD YOU PLEASE TELL US IF THERE IS FULL AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM ON THE POLICY
STATED BY PRESIDENT NIXON AND QUOTED BY THE AMBASSADOR TODAY THAT
THE ONLY REMAINING AMERICAN ACTIVITY IN CAMBODIA AFTER JULY 1
WILL BE AIR MISSIONS TO INTERDICT THE MOVEMENT OF ENEMY TROOPS
AND MATERIAL?

A NO. I'M AFRAID I WILL HAVE TO STICK WITH THE PRESIDENT'S
WORDS WHICH WERE QUOTED BY AMBASSADOR HABIB AND REFER YOUR
QUESTION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM.
(WHEREUPON AT 3:45 O'CLOCK P.M. THE PRESS BRIEFING WAS
CONCLUDED.)

HABIB

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